



**HUNTER PETS**  
14 Waterloo Ave, Thornton NSW 2322  
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## **RABBITS CARE SHEET**

RABBITS MAKE VERY popular pets, as they are naturally clean and disease-free.

They are best kept in a sheltered outdoor position such as a porch or a garden shed, or they may be put out in the open air if they are kept in a suitably weather-proof hutch. They usually get on quite well with guinea pigs and, if introduced carefully, will run around quite happily with a cat, sometimes even a dog.

**DIET:** Provide grain and pellet 'rabbit mix', green food, and a constant supply of hay and fresh water. Remember, rabbits are constant feeders and it is natural for them to be nibbling away at something all the time. You will soon learn from your pet the quantities he requires to keep him sleek, lively, and at a good weight.

Green food includes cauliflower, spring greens, celery, carrots, apples, and appear, but never rhubarb. Cabbage and lettuce cause diarrhoea if fed in anything more than a very small amount so they are not recommended. Freshly picked grass is much more suitable than lawn clippings but must be free of chemical contaminants. Kitchen scraps such as bread (preferably brown) may be fed in moderation, but should not be used instead of the 'rabbit mix', which is properly formulated for the purpose. In the winter a bran mash and additional grain are advisable. A mineral lick is appreciated, as is a piece of wood for gnawing, an important activity that prevents the front teeth from growing too long. Water is best provided in the form of a drip feed bottle securely fastened to the wire of the cage. It is not true that rabbits do not require water, and it should always be available.

**HOUSING:** Buy the best possible hutch, particularly if it is to be exposed to the weather. Make sure it is fully weather, proof and provide extra cover to protect it from driving rain. It should also be dog-proof. Wooden floors should be painted with a suitable protective sealant.

You will also need a pen, or means of providing a daily run for about an hour, preferably both. Some rabbits may be exercised indoors, but check that they don't occasionally eat your cushions or nibble your wiring!



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Give plenty of hay or straw for bedding, preferably over a thick whitewood sawdust base. Remove any wet straw, stale food, and dropping daily, and wipe any damp patches with a weak solution of a suitable disinfectant - your pet store can advise you about this. Sprinkle on fresh sawdust. Clean out thoroughly once a week: also clean and move pen as necessary.

**HEALTH:** given a good routine, you should have no trouble. Check that they hay or straw is never mouldy, as this can cause respiratory troubles. Shake off any chaff or thistles and never use the dirty oddments at the bottom of the bag. Tray to avoid damp, draughts, and too strong light. Long-haired rabbits need some grooming, and your pet shop can also advise about the best way of doing this. Remember that the pet shop has practical knowledge of all aspects of your pet's health and well-being, but some problems are best attended to by a vet.